12/31/71

Dear Paul,

Your non-airmailing of the 28th made very good time and it interesting. I read it this a.m., but since then, what, with Jerry P having to assemble himself and his plans for the big night, I've list some of what I had in mind. So, I'll go over each part, beginning with CIA, where I have a separate file on your FPI requests I've started (don't remember how far back it goes).

What I think may be most significant in it is the length and trouble represented. My strongest recommendation is that you regard this as exceptional, ask yourself why the length and trouble, as distinguished from what you point out as and as is significant, speed (I'll be devil's advocate on responsiveness), and accept one possibility, that it is an invitation to further correspondence. It is easy to learn whether this can be productive, and I'll suggest a few direct challenges that may help you learn.

Goingalong with this I strongly discourage any use of his sending you the Belin drek. This would really do us no good and it would, without doubt, turn him off. Why do that? Take him on instead. All these peiople hide it but they all know better and they are all devilled by a yearning for self-justification.

We are so far past where an occasional story, even a good one, can mean anything! I avoid publicity. I didn't seek it in Dallas, for example, and made an appearance on TV not onlyonly because it was asked of me but because I wanted in the future to be able to talk to that reporter again. He was a different man between the time of our first meeting and the end of out filming the next day, and he gave me something interesting I've already told you, the bit about the bondsman, a Ruby-like character, a standing and awaitin' at Decker's!

This also means I recommend against sending the last graph to SM. Nothing to be gained, and she explodes so magnificently!

There may be something in the new image bit. If Salandria and Garrison can now say they are the good guys simply because of what is missing in The Pentagon Papers, maybe the Agency has seen possibilities. But lets use it if so. Constructively only. Give them a chance to show the new face, if that there is (and I don t believe it). I don't think they aim to recruit you. I have just gotten but haven't read Barnet's piece. (He is a friend, bu I got it from another. I'vecarboned you on corres. with his IPS pals and associates, who I expect here in the near future.) Agree on his cited interpretation on "clean intelligence". The establishment of new potentials for Latin America fits and suggests also a rethinking and a reorientation they may have trouble getting the military to agree to. No new pormotions in it and less for the manufacturers. One of these things is an entire airline awaiting such need, I think Southern Transport. They also have on near you, Rocky Mountain. They not only have to go deeper underground but they have to abandon that on which they can't maintain security, like students, and prepare for a tougher time.

They are not being "reasonable" with everyone. Example: me.

I would not reply non-commitally. Don't under-estimate them. They know what you think. Be in character. And don't drop the factual matters. Reason/argue, as I'll come to in his letter. They can't really believe the WC conclusions. They do know their bsuiness, no matter how much they fuckup and depend on raw power and wealth, both of which corrupt. If we can't know why White sent you the Belin piece, use it, kind of intellectual judo. On your question, I think this: you are not under any legal restrictions jot to use his letter and even if you were, there is nothing you could do. I urge that you resist the temptation, for at most you can embarrass them.him, and that does no real good. Belin is so farout you can use it and should.

White says they want to declassify. I don't believe it. I think he may want to

believe it himself and I'm certain he wants you to. Use this, too. Challenege him on it. Politely, though, not crudely. And go over all of this carefully for intended or subconscious semantics:"But, balanced against that is our duty to protect classified information and intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure." The "unauthorized" and "classified" parts are of his determination, not something externally imposed. I think the approach should be in terms of getting him to justify both on specific items. They would classify yesterday's garbage if it originated with them, and not for any good reason, simply because they do everything. Why else do you think Ellsberg had none of their internal papers? "Their content, however, does not materially affect the Commission's findings." Here he is saying that they do not entirely agree with the Commission's findings, his escape being "materially", and further, in his view, that Being LHO as the lone unasisted. This puts him in the position of doing your thinking and your research for you. Now on the specific, except for showing what is no secret, that one way or another they pbotograph everyone going into certain embassies and consulates, how can any of what he said geberally apply to your specific request? There is no such disclosure probable in what they are still classifying. Keep reminding him that they only are doing the classifying. He reaches a reduction on this.

Unidentified man. I believ he means it when he says unidentified, too. But I don't believe he need have remained unidentified. And there is another possible interpretation if you read him carefully. It begins with what they are not "sayisfied" with and continues with a strange pbrasing, "so far as we are concerned, the man is still unidentified."

But there remains much more. Like how uptight they were about this man. Use and send him copies of Epstein's quotation of Liebeler on this and anything like it you can think of and ask him to explain or justify is and to reconcile it with what he says now, why the CIA should have had any reluctance in levelling with the WC. This is a challenge that makes a record, and these guys don't like those kinds of records. There is a conflict between what he says and the WC experience. You went too far in offering the out he used. His reason for thinking then that there could have been some association also ought be challenged. It makes no sense at all. Without some specific reason, they would not have sent this one of the many pictures they undoubtedly took and/or had. Why this one man and no other? That they were in the same area at the same time fits everyone else at least as much. That this picture was taken too late merely emphasized that somebody had to have had what he considered a good reason for sending this picture to the FBI and not the undoubtedly many earlier one.

"Oswald was not under investigation by us when he was in Mexico..." evasions underlined. "For" us? Us as agents for others? He falls short of saying no CIA interest and no CIA investigations, direct or indirect.

His denial of "indication of an association" is ridiculous, as set forth above. Why this one man, then? And the reason he may have not to release the entire picture could be legit: not to disclose the point from which taken.

There are enormous evasions in his comments on Item 3. "This has no substantive information bearing on the WC findings and the report is till classified." They have taken the position the Report is right, therefore it is their interpretatiob of what is substantive, and that is decided by the pre-determined conclusions. The decision of what is "substantive" ought not be on an ex parte decision. Suppose the Report is wrong, on there is reason to doubt one aspect? Would there be the same evaluation of what is "substantive"? Naturally not. "Still classified"? Yes, but by him, not for him. What is basis under FOI for classification? Can it reasonably be assumed that everything except the address (did he mean addressee?) and signature must be classified? Doubt it. Press. And "would seem to serve no purpose" again puts him in position of determining what you can or should believe, which is wrong.

On Belin, thanks him and go into it and Belin, but only on what is in piece,

I mean only. Forget about Texas Obs., SM, etc. For example, and there is bound to be much more, each piece of which I thibk you should take the time to give him. Belin says Brewer followed LHO into the theater. This is worse than false. Belin conducted the interrogation of Brewer. Each and every falsehood, cited with reference, might make a dent in him, and then flash back to the "substantive", etc., interpretations he has made on your behalf. Assume that nonn of the bigger boys have had time to do any extensive reading, and give him basis for having doubts, at least in Belin's stuff that he has sent you as the last word. Thank him for doing it and day you have taken time for what he doesn't have time for, after getting his kindness, and give authority for each destruction of Belin 's and Commission's knowledge, integrity, cerdibility, etc., and ask him if this is why he believes the WR, or why he thinks he should be deciding for ypu what your research requires, etc. Send him a copy of such things as Bowley's affidavit, ask him why Belin and Ball didn't use Bowley as a witness, point out the meaning, and ask him if this is the kind of thin he finds so persuasive or that he thinks should decide for you what you should think and seek for your research. You can use this for a major assualt on his willingness to believe the WR, assuming he really does - and his is an important position - and on that "usbstantial connection" jazz. It will take some time, but I think it is worth it. They know of the accusations against them, and they have, whether or not they disclose it, an expectable sensitivity on this. Why the hell else were they having me monitored wherever I spoke (I've got carbons of what was done for them, bills, etc.). DON'T mention this. But read it. Give him a challenge on Belin's use of Trevor-Roper instead, for example, of that chapter of WHITEWASH (and the CIA does have it. I know when and where they bought it-early). As him to read that chpater and compare with Belin's self-serving version. Which also happens to be unfaithful to fact, as with "unequivocal" identifications. Note use of "cartridges" and ask him how many murders he knows of committed with cartridge cases. Ask him why Belin says this and makes no ref. to what is lethal, the bullets, and then unload on this. Ask him, since he says he believes the WR, what evidence he knows of that connects any bullet with the JFK assassination "beyond a reasonable doubt", Belin's words. Or what one bit of evidence he can cite that proves the shots came from that window. Every one of these points is false, if you remember my (as yet unanswered) letter to Salisbury.

Note also even Belin has escape clauses, like "ultimate" conclusions. What are they based on? Can't he subscribe to all? But if the rest is like his, what remains, and on what basis besides trust does White credit WR? Should you vest any more trust in his evaluations of what are "substantial" in terms of evidentiary value since he says he uses this in the context of belief in the R's conslusions. And if truth only was Belin's goal, remind White of the Rowland's and his refusal to let her correct a factual error while needlessly correcting his own grammar on the same page. I suggest sending ref's to my work for several reasons, one being a challenge to White, that since he has taken the positon that the WR is correct and you are so far away, why doesn't he invite me to confront his concepts of proof, truth and evidence, for you are far and I am close by. He won't do it, and perhaps you won't want to, but it is feasible and you can puncture that holy and better-than-thou crap fast with it. This will require that he just use his raw power, and if he does what have you lost, or have a few doubts, or consider the new image they are trying to cast, assuming they are.

If I didn't think this has possibilities, I'd not have taken this time. Use your own judgement. And I'm neither carboning or discussing with anyone else. Best, HW